

SUGGESTED OPENING REMARKS
Francis A. Donovan, USAID/P
Philippine Global Trade E-Learning Program
Meeting with WTO DG Pascal Lamy
December 12, 2006, 2:30 P.M.
Manila Peninsula Hotel

Director General Pascal Lamy,
World Trade Organization;
UnderSecretary Thomas Aquino,
Department of Trade and Investment;
Mr. Gao Pronove of Earth Council Geneva;
Other Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning.

On behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people, I thank the organizers of this workshop, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and the Earth Council of Geneva, for bringing us all here to recognize the contributions of the Global Trade e-Learning Program.

I am also grateful to Mr. Pascal Lamy, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, in accepting the invitation to

address the participants to the Philippine Global Trade E-Learning Program.

I am honored to be here and USAID is proud to be a partner of the Department of Trade and Industry, led by Senior Undersecretary Thomas Aquino and Secretary Peter Favila, the Earth Council Geneva, represented here by Mr. Gao Pronove, and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. I also wish to acknowledge the support extended by the Swiss Government to the Earth Council - Geneva in undertaking this Global Trade e-Learning Program.

The main reason that the U.S. Government is supporting this undertaking that we are celebrating today is rooted in our desire to increase the capacity of countries, like the Philippines, to be able to determine their own course of action in developing trade policies.

Throughout this e-Learning process, it was encouraging to see DTI and its implementing partners take full control of the project from

the very beginning. From the selection of the participants, to the courses deployed, to the determination of the content of the courses, the control has been with the Department of Trade and Industry.

Having laid that premise, it is however our belief that the breaking down of trade barriers will eventually result in greater development for all of us in the world. The United States is committed to this objective.

USAID has undertaken this literacy program on trade law and policy through its Economic Modernization and Reform Through Efficient Reforms and Governance Enhancement (EMERGE) activity to promote sustainable economic growth and enhance the competitiveness of the Philippine economy.

These objectives will not be attainable if the Philippines cannot mobilize its bureaucracy and the stakeholders of trade policy development to forge positions. It goes without saying that

before this will happen; everyone will have to be on the same page. Not necessarily to achieve one position or one persuasion, but to come to a shared understanding of the basic rules and philosophical basis of these rules so that a healthy discussion and debate can ensue. This is the primary reason why the Department of Trade and Industry has seen it fit to extend the invitation to the judiciary, civil society, business and the academe in this endeavor.

Realizing the urgency of this objective, DTI and USAID have together adopted an e-Learning approach, through the use of the internet, to achieve this objective with the widest audience possible. However, realizing that learning is essentially rooted in human interaction, the workshops have contributed in building networks among and between the participants. Beyond this, the blended approach has allowed the learners to touch base with the experts in the field and to learn about the latest developments.

In closing, again, let me thank our partners for making this possible. More importantly, let me congratulate the participants for their perseverance and diligence in the desire to forge a better tomorrow for the Philippines.

USAID is pleased to be able to support the Philippine Global Trade e-Learning Program. I congratulate each and every one of you on your enthusiasm and your achievement.

Thank you and good day.

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.